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# OPEN LETTERS.

## WHAT IS PRUNUS INSITITIA?

I AM somewhat at a loss to understand the criticism which Dr. Rydberg offers in the December GAZETTE upon my conclusions regarding *Prunus insititia* Linn. as set forth in the GAZETTE of last June. He says: "If Professor Waugh had said that *P. insititia* is the same as *P. domestica damascena* . . . I would have been the last to criticise." This is precisely what I did say; and it is a conclusion upon which I still insist.

My reasons for this conclusion are so fully set forth in the article of last June that they need not be reiterated here. As Dr. Rydberg has appealed to the European literature, however, I may call attention to the fact that this was somewhat fully cited in my original article; and that special prominence was given to the opinions of Koch, whom Dr. Rydberg properly calls "the acknowledged authority in Germany." In citing Koch I directed attention to the peculiar fact that his opinion in 1869<sup>1</sup> was contradicted by his opinion in 1876.<sup>2</sup> In this latest study of his, which gives the clearest view of the European fruit flora with which I am acquainted, Koch says in so many words that *Prunus insititia* "is a Damson run wild." This agrees fully with the conclusion in hand.

I may add that, since writing the article which appeared in the GAZETTE of last June, I have seen the European bullace growing thriftily and fruiting abundantly in the grounds of Messrs. Ellwanger & Barry, Rochester, N. Y. It is not to be distinguished botanically or horticulturally from the damson group of plums, for which the oldest botanical name is *Prunus domestica damascena* Linn. This bullace, however, is what is generally known in Europe as *P. insititia*.

Dr. Rydberg says that *Prunus insititia* does not exist in America. That depends on what he means. The damsons are very common in our gardens, of course, and in some places have run more than half wild. Holding to the belief, then, that the damsons, *P. domestica damascena* and *P. insititia* are all one thing, I should say that, if *P. insititia* exists anywhere, it exists today in America.—F. A. WAUGH, *University of Vermont, Experiment Station*.

<sup>1</sup>Dendrologie 1:95. 1869.

<sup>2</sup>Deutsche Obsthölze 142. 1876.